

WE CLAIM:

1. A method of determining trust in the exchange of documents, said method comprising the steps of:
 - 5 a) recording meta-data on the exchange of each document; and
 - b) utilizing said meta-data to determine a degree of trust for each participant in said exchange of documents.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein said meta-data comprises
 - 10 information to identify:
 - i) the sender of each document;
 - ii) the recipient of each document; and
 - iii) the documents on which each document depends.
3. The method of claim 2 wherein said meta-data further comprises
 - 15 information to identify:
 - iv) the role of the sender of each document;
 - v) the role of the recipient of each document; and
 - vi) the role of each document.
4. The method of claim 3 wherein said meta-data further comprises a
 - 20 digital signature for each document.
5. The method of claim 1 wherein said utilizing comprises the steps of:
 - 25 i) creating a document dependency vector D, based upon analyzing the documents sent by each participant;
 - ii) creating a recursive document vector DR, based on the results of step i);
 - iii) creating a trust vector TV for each participant based upon the results
 - 30 of step ii); and
 - iv) creating a global trust vector GTV based upon the results of step iii).

6. The method of claim 5 further comprising the step of:
- v) creating a global trust matrix per document per individual, GTVP.

7. A system for determining trust in the exchange of documents, said
5 system comprising:

- a) means for recording meta-data on the exchange of each document;
and
b) means for utilizing said meta-data to determine a degree of trust for
each participant in said exchange of documents.

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8. The system of claim 7 wherein said meta-data comprises
information to identify:

- i) the sender of each document;
ii) the recipient of each document; and
15 iii) the documents on which each document depends.

9. The system of claim 8 wherein said meta-data further comprises
information to identify:

- iv) the role of the sender of each document;
20 v) the role of the recipient of each document; and
vi) the role of each document.

10. The system of claim 9 wherein said meta-data further comprises a
digital signature for each document.

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11. The system of claim 7 wherein said means of utilizing comprises:

- i) means for creating a document dependency vector D based upon an
analysis of the documents sent by each participant,
ii) means for creating a recursive document vector DR, based upon
30 dependency vector D;
iii) means for creating a trust vector TV, for each participant, based
upon vector DR; and

iv) means for creating a global trust vector GTV based upon vector TV.

12. The system of claim 11 further comprising;

v) means for creating a global trust matrix per document per individual,
5 GTVP.

13. A system for determining trust in the exchange of documents, said system comprising a network of general purpose computers, each computer containing;

- 10 a) a link protocol controller;
- b) an input queue operatively connected to said link protocol controller;
- c) an output queue operatively connected to said link protocol controller;
- d) an interface response manager operatively connected to said output
15 queue;
- e) a query request engine operatively connected to said interface response manager and said input queue; and
- f) one or more computing modules, each of said computing modules operatively connected to said query request engine.

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14. The system of claim 13 wherein said one or more computing modules comprises:

- g) a routing table update/query module;
- h) a keystore update/query module;
- 25 i) a trust analysis module;
- j) a secure network verification module; and
- k) a distributed backup module.

15. The system of claim 14 further comprising a network time unit
30 operatively connected to one or more of said one or more computing modules.

16. A computer readable medium containing instructions for determining trust in the exchange of documents comprising:

- a) instructions for recording meta-data on the exchange of each document; and
- 5 b) instructions for utilizing said meta-data to determine a degree of trust for each participant in said exchange of documents.

17. The medium of claim 16 wherein said meta-data comprises information to identify:

- 10 i) the sender of each document;
- ii) the recipient of each document; and
- iii) the documents on which each document depends.

18. The medium of claim 17 wherein said meta-data further comprises information to identify:

- 15 iv) the role of the sender of each document;
- v) the role of the recipient of each document; and
- vi) the role of each document.

20 19. The medium of claim 18 wherein said meta-data further comprises a digital signature for each document.

20. The medium of claim 16 wherein said instructions for utilizing comprises:

- 25 i) instructions for creating a document dependency vector D, based upon analyzing the documents sent by each participant;
- ii) instructions for creating a recursive document vector DR, based on the results of i);
- iii) instructions for creating a trust vector TV for each participant based upon the results of ii); and
- 30 iv) instructions for creating a global trust vector GTV based upon the results of iii).

21. The medium of claim 20 further comprising instructions for creating a global trust matrix per document per individual, GTVP.